

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DHAHRA 01066 231154Z

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ACTION FBOE-00

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R 231120Z AUG 76
FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4944

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

UNCLAS DHAHRAN 1066

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ABLD, ENRG, BGEN, SA

SUBJECT: COMPOUND POWER SUPPLY -- PROPERTY 01472

REF: STATE 205198

1. POST BEGAN SEVERAL WEEKS AGO TO LOOK INTO COMMERCIAL POWER AS ALTERNATIVE TO GENERATING ITS OWN ELECTRIC POWER. STAFF SHORTAGES (EG. POST HAS BEEN WITHOUT ADMIN OFFICER FOR OVER TWO MONTHS) HAVE DELAYED OUR INVESTIGATION, BUT WE HAVE OBTAINED SOME BASIC INFORMATION AND ISOLATED SOME PROBLEM AREAS WHICH REQUIRE FURTHER EVALUATION BEFORE SUBMITTING OUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO DEPT.

2. ONE PROBLEM IS THAT LOCAL ELECTRIC COMPANY, DHAHRAN ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY (DEPCO), LIKE EVERY OTHER PUBLIC UTILITY IN EASTERN PROVINCE, IS UNABLE TO MEET RAPIDLY INCREASING DEMAND FOR ITS SERVICE. IN PAST TWO YEARS IT HAS EXPANDED ITS POWER GENERATION CAPACITY ANNUALLY BY 50 PER CENT AND IS IMPLEMENTING PROGRAM TO EXPAND CAPACITY BY ANOTHER 50 PER CENT DURING CURRENT YEAR. DESPITE ITS SUBSTANTIAL EXPANSION, DEPCO IS NOT COVERING DEMAND. TO ILLUSTRATE, ONE LARGE BANK-OWNED HOUSING COMPOUND WAS RECENTLY HOOKED UP TO DEPCO AFTER EIGHT-MONTH WAIT. EVEN WHEN HOOKED UP, THERE IS NO ASSURANCE THAT CONSUMERS WILL RECEIVE DEPENDABLE SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY. IN NEARBY ALKHOBAR THERE ARE FREQUENT OUTAGES AS DEPCO IS FORCED TO CURTAIL SERVICE WHEN SUMMER TEMPERATURES ARE REGULARLY OVER
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110 DEGREE MARK. DEPCO'S GENERAL MANAGER HAS

ASSURED POST THAT HE WOULD GIVE OUR REQUEST FOR SERVICE PRIORITY TREATMENT, BUT WE ARE NOT CERTAIN THEY WILL CAN FIND THE WAY.

3. THERE IS ALSO TECHNICAL PROBLEM OF DEPCO'S ELECTRIC SUPPLY MATCHING COMPOUND'S DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM. STEP-DOWN TRANSFORMER AND OTHER EQUIPMENT NOT AVAILABLE HERE WILL BE REQUIRED AND POST (WITH

CORPS OF ENGINEERS ASSISTANCE) IS CURRENTLY CONDUCTING TECHNICAL INVESTIGATION OF PROBLEM. WHEN INVESTIGATION COMPLETED, A REPORT INCLUDING DETAILED COST ESTIMATES REQUESTED IN REFTEL, AND OUR RECOMMENDATIONS, WILL BE FORWARDED TO DEPARTMENT.

4. POST APPRECIATES DEPT'S INTEREST IN OUR ELECTRIC SUPPLY PROBLEM. AT MOMENT WE ARE CONCENTRATING ON MAINTAINING SERVICE TO COMPOUND RESIDENTS AND CONGEN OFFICES. ARAMCO HAS PROVIDED INVALUABLE HELP, IN SPITE OF ITS OWN BURGEONING DEMAND FOR POWER, BY LOANING A PORTABLE GENERATOR. WE HOPE THIS UNIT CAN BE RETAINED LONG ENOUGH TO PERMIT POST'S TWO DAMAGED GENERATOR UNITS TO BE REPAIRED. ONE SHIPMENT OF GENERATOR PARTS, PROCURED IN UK, HAD STILL NOT ARRIVED ALTHOUGH IT WAS ORGINALLY SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE AUGUST 17 BY AIR. LATEST ETA IS AUGUST 23.
BUSHNELL

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